

## ACTIVITY - LIVE ON THE TRAIL

ARTS DISCIPLINE:	Drama
THE ARTS STANDARD:	Standard 7 - Drama and other disciplines
THE BENCHMARK:	Know the ways in which other disciplines influence drama
INTEGRATED SUBJECTS:	History, literature, visual arts, music, dance
GRADES:	9-12

### A.R.T.S. TRUNK OBJECTS

- A.R.T.S. Trunk objects
- *The Journals of Lewis and Clark*, book
- *Lewis and Clark at Fort Mandan*, video
- *Lewis and Clark: Voyage of Discovery*, CD

### MATERIALS REQUIRED

- Access to library and the Internet
- TV/VCR
- CD player
- Video camera and tapes
- Props
- Costumes

### BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Calvin Grinnell, a native of New Town, North Dakota, speaks from the perspective of his Arikara, French and Hidatsa ancestry when he states that for Lewis and Clark meeting American Indians,

*"Language would have been the first cultural exchange and an important one."*

When we think of the word "language" we usually think of it in terms of words. For Judith Simundson, a storyteller with ancestral roots in Norway, there is a difference between the spoken word and the written. In her view:

*"Oral language is the first language . . . Oral language is related to the written language, but not the same. Written language is an abstraction, it represents the energy of oral speech. Oral language has integrity and structure. It reflects people, culture and time."*

John Berger, writing in his book *Ways of Seeing*, points out:

*"Seeing comes before words. The child looks and recognizes before it can speak."*



## CULTURAL ENCOUNTERS WITH LEWIS AND CLARK

ACTIVITIES - INTEGRATED

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The human race has always used visual information to record people and events, a practice which dates back more than 30,000 years (when primitive peoples created cave paintings). Visual communication was certainly important for the American Indian. They used sign language to trade with other tribes who spoke a different language and they recorded their history with pictures and symbols. Likewise, Lewis and Clark relied not only on interpreters, but also on visual means of communication such as sign language, demonstration, acting out, singing and dancing, to communicate with the American Indians.

In many ways, music, dance and the visual arts can be considered "languages" too. In the sense that they are "non-verbal" languages they become universal. Through the arts, it is possible to communicate ideas and feelings across cultures.

### PROCEDURE

- Have students read out loud selections from *The Journals of Lewis and Clark* book that relate to communication on the journey.
- Use the quotes from the background information to instigate a discussion on verbal and non-verbal ways of communicating. Review the objects from the trunk with the students.
- Review the highlights of the *Lewis and Clark: Voyage of Discovery* CD and show the *Lewis and Clark at Fort Mandan* video. Discuss facts about the voyage that students found interesting. Make a list of these facts for reference.
- Explain the idea of replacing the words of well-known or popular lyrics, or rhyme patterns, with Voyage of Discovery facts to create scenes of the Lewis and Clark journey with a humorous twist. Examples:

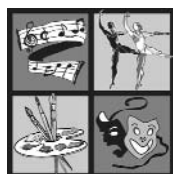
Lewis had a wondrous job (*to the tune of "Mary Had A Little Lamb"*)  
It was we surely know,  
To follow the water to the west  
The going sure was slow.

He took his friend and some good men  
And a dog along the way,  
They journeyed far away from home  
We still study them today.

- Lewis be nimble, Clark be quick  
Sakakawea helped men from becoming sick.

- Row, row, row your piroque  
Against the currents' stream  
Wearily, wearily, wearily, wearily,  
We sure did want to scream.

- Have students brainstorm Mother Goose nursery rhymes, well-known songs or



## CULTURAL ENCOUNTERS WITH LEWIS AND CLARK

ACTIVITIES - INTEGRATED

contemporary music (rock, rap, country, etc.). Give them feedback as they write replacement lyrics.

- Group the students, assigning journey time frames to each group. For example:
  - Jefferson and the Louisiana Territory purchase
  - Planning and preparation
  - St. Louis to Mandan
  - North Dakota winter
  - Return of Jefferson's "Medicine Bundle"
  - Fort Mandan to Fort Clatsop
  - the return journey
- Have students find journal entries relating to their topic to use as a basis for their video story (see next item).
- The task for each group is to prepare a video, suitable for lower grades, to help bring Lewis and Clark to life. The videos should include:
  - a fact about the Voyage of Discovery to be read out loud at the beginning of the video
  - acting out of a rhyme, song or poem with props, costumes, backdrops, music, etc.
  - humorous aspects
  - objects from the trunk
- Provide time for students to rehearse and to gather props, costumes, appropriate music, etc. Give feedback, suggest ideas as needed and encourage students to incorporate movement and gesture in their performance.
- Organize the videotaping of the presentations.
- Hold a critique session looking at the strengths and weaknesses of each presentation.
- Have students reflect on this experience in writing.
- Arrange for the videos to be made available to lower grade educators.

### ASSESSMENT

- Level of involvement by each student.
- Ability to cooperate in a group.
- Creativity shown in writing of "replacement" lyrics.
- Quality of performance.
- Personal reflection on the experience.

